

# JOINT ACQUISITION COMMAND DOCTRINE —A SUCCESS STORY

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In the past, war planners typically treated acquisition as an afterthought. Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom Joint Task Force commanders were not initially afforded the full value of *acquisition capabilities* to buy local resources and manage the exploding number of contractors in the Area of Responsibility (AOR). Recognizing this shortfall, DoD created the *Joint Contracting Command* (JCC). The JCC provided substantial contracting capacity and coordination—critical attributes to effective, efficient AOR operations. This research and resultant report, originally prepared in 2006 for the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, played a substantial role in shaping joint thinking, culminating in creating Joint Publication (JP) 4-10, *Operational Contract Support*. JP 4-10 establishes long-needed *joint contracting* doctrine for Combatant Command AOR operations.

**Keywords:** *War Planning, Joint Contracting, Acquisition Capabilities, Joint Contracting Command, Joint Publication 4-10*

# WAR PLANNING



## Joint Acquisition Command Doctrine —Yes It's Needed!

*"The Department's Total Force—its active and reserve military components, its civil servants, and its contractors—constitutes its warfighting capability and capacity."*

*Quadrennial Defense Review Report, 2006, p. 74*

In today's fast-moving military environment, contractors have become critical to Joint Task Force (JTF) operations. As a result, contract management increased in complexity and scope requiring robust Department of Defense (DoD) management to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of local material procurement and the contractor's support to the mission.

As operations in Iraq were to prove, insufficient contractor support planning placed great strains on the United States' ability to manage its contractors. While contracting efforts were ultimately successful, insufficient contract management capacity and coordination led to substantial efficiency losses and a reduction in effectiveness.

In recognizing these deficiencies, a Joint Contracting Command (JCC) with Joint Service participation and theater-wide responsibility was created for managing contracting efforts. However, doctrine did not exist for such an organization. Identifying this shortfall and in an attempt to address these deficiencies, we conducted research to examine the feasibility of establishing joint contracting doctrine for Combatant Command Area of Responsibility (COCOM AOR) operations. Along with this research, we submitted a report to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in 2006 that proposed codification of joint contracting doctrine to permanently capture JTF lessons learned and ensure adequate deliberate contract planning for Operational Plans (OPLANS) and Contingency Plans (CONPLANS). The report proposed a full range of acquisition processes to accommodate the increasing workload of contractors in the AOR.

We also submitted the report to the Joint Staff in 2006, where the J-4 offices took great interest in our recommendations for joint doctrine. On October 17, 2008, Joint Publication 4-10, *Operational Contract Support*, was officially published (JCS, 2008). JP 4-10 addresses every concern presented in our report, places in doctrine almost every recommendation from our research, and reaches even further into a *war planning* option only recently applied on the battlefield during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom: making maximum use of contractors on the battlefield.

The success of our efforts validated our research and reinforced a professional ethos to which we believe acquisition practitioners and professionals would do well to adhere: *If you suspect that an activity, task, or policy is not correct, then you should take action. Investigate it, write about it, and have the fortitude to make changes.*

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### **PAST JTF CONTRACT PLANNING**

In JTFs prior to and during Iraq, the Services brought their own contracting capabilities. Integration of the Service-let contracts, if it took place, was not by design. With increasing acquisition requirements placed on DoD for nontraditional reconstruction and stabilization operations as seen in Iraq, no one Service or agency initially had responsibility. Contracting officers often failed to use cost-effective local capabilities, opting instead for the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP), even when local vendors served to reduce DoD logistics requirements (S. M. Seay, personal communication, January 24, 2006). At other times, the Services unknowingly competed against each other for local resources. These and other issues illustrated the need for an overarching acquisition strategy—one that would meet effectiveness and efficiency goals as well as policy requirements for the JTF. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recognized this as a systemic problem as far back as the late 1980s. The GAO recommended DoD include contract management in all operations planning (GAO, 2004b, p. 5).

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### **DOCTRINE PREVENTS REPEATING MISTAKES**

The best reason for doctrine is to codify the lessons learned from past mistakes. The data collected for this study showed the DoD suffered from a lack of operational contracting doctrine during contingency and post-contingency operations at least as far back as July 1992, when the U.S. involvement in Bosnia began in the Balkans as part of humanitarian relief efforts (GAO, 2000).

Our research found the DoD learned and relearned these lessons at each major contingency despite the fact that lessons learned generated after each conflict demonstrated the need for doctrine. The case for doctrine was compelling (D. A. Scott, personal communication, January 4, 2006; C. M. Bolton, personal communication, January 19, 2009; S. M. Seay, personal communication, January 24, 2006; L. H. Thompson, personal communication, February 9, 2006; & M. J. Brown, personal communication, March 1, 2006). Joint Pub 4-10 also supports this assertion in its Introduction, which includes quotes from the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and a U.S. Marine Corps statement of contractor support in World War II.

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### **CORE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND HOW THEY COMPARE TO JP 4-10**

Our research, conducted at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) in 2006 for the Acquisition School, culminated in an 82-page report titled *Joint Acquisition Command Doctrine*. Using historical research, interviews, and other sources, it offered recommendations to codify joint contracting. At that time, our J-4 point of contact was tasked with initiating the development of Joint Doctrine for JTF integrated contracting. During our research, we held several meetings with action officer representatives from J-4, Joint Chiefs of



Staff (JCS). By mid-2007, a full draft joint contracting doctrine publication was under formal review. Of note, our report generated 26 recommendations for joint contracting doctrine—24 of which are found in JP 4-10. The following discussion pinpoints selected descriptions of our study's recommendations and how JP 4-10 addressed those concepts.

*Single Integrative Process.* Our report recommended a single integrative acquisition process within a JTF to allow an enhanced use of acquisition teams in-theater. This would assist in creating a critical mass of acquisition expertise, thus allowing the COCOM and JTF commander strategic unity and flexibility with respect to its contract support. With dispersed contracting organizations in Iraq, acquisition personnel were hard-pressed to devote time to strategic thinking due to a focus on daily tactical considerations. Functions such as resource allocation, balancing skill sets, program integration, and requirements prioritization suffered. As an example, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) replaced a task on the Air Force Contract Augmentation Program (AFCAP) with a theater-wide air traffic services contract. In Iraq, however, a different contract provided the service (D. A. Scott, personal communication, January 4, 2006), thus setting the stage for coordination issues that would have been simpler had a single contract been awarded. GAO also recognized these problems as stemming from a lack of coordination (GAO, 2005). We proposed a joint contracting activity provide a single integrative acquisition process to evaluate these disparities and provide the best acquisition strategy possible. This recommendation is a core tenet of JP 4-10.

An integrated approach would allow the joint contracting activity to pool resources and optimize acquisition decisions at critical points as required by the JTF Commander. This would present the opportunity to leverage specific skill sets to fulfill high-priority acquisition activities. In an interview with Maj Gen Darryl A. Scott, USAF, Joint Contracting Command's commander in Iraq, he stated, "There are other assets in-theater that could be used to balance workload to make sure high-priority and/or high-payoff work gets addressed" (D. A. Scott, personal communication, January 4, 2006). Former JCC Iraq Commander BG Steven Seay, USA (Ret.), also acknowledged this deficiency and recommended acquisition personnel, including contracting officers and other specialists, be consolidated into a single organization (S. M. Seay, personal communication, January 24, 2006). The annexes to our report recommended three integrated organizational constructs—one each for large, medium, and small task forces. Also in its annexes, JP 4-10 recommends three constructs: Service Component support to its own forces, a "Lead Service Theater Support Contracting Organization," and a "Joint Theater Support Contracting Organization."

*Title 10 Authorities.* Our report recommended the Services use their inherent Title 10 authorities to ensure resources and contracting authorities would be in place. Chapter 2, paragraph 7 of JP 4-10 describes the Service Title 10 authorities and how to use those authorities to enhance joint contracting activity.

*Coordination Council.* Our report recommended creation of a Coordination Council to enhance resource cooperation among the Services. Roughly analogous to the Coordination Council, JP 4-10 directs the establishment of the Combatant Commander Logistics Procurement Support Board (CLPSB) to deal with general policies and AOR-wide issues related to contracting support.

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### **REQUIREMENTS GENERATION/PRIORITIZATION SUPPORT**

We recommended in 2006, the JTF contracting command entity should have the authority to operate an acquisition review board on behalf of the JTF commander to collect and prioritize contracting requirements. Traditionally, a contracting or acquisition activity does not generate requirements. As happened in Iraq, however, the requiring activities, especially those responsible for stability and reconstruction, did not always have sufficient resources or time to integrate and prioritize requirements across the theater. Iraq's JCC filled in much of the gap with a relative degree of success. Therefore, a review board should have the flexibility to perform these functions as needed and provide recommendations to the JTF Commander or other supported customers. These recommendations would consider declared needs from the operators. Upon receipt of the customer's direction, the board would integrate requirements appropriately, develop acquisition strategies, and execute contracts.

JP 4-10 directs the creation of a Joint Acquisition Review Board (JARB) specifically to control requirements generation and prioritization. JP 4-10 also directs creation of a Joint Contracting Support Board (JCSB) for the purposes of assigning prioritized requirements to the best contracting activity. Our construct assigned this to the joint contracting authority without identifying a separate board to perform this task. In addition, our research supported the need to assign tasks to contracting entities, regardless of Service, to ensure balanced workload and matched skill-sets/workforce availability. JP 4-10 agrees, and in fact offers a better and more refined approach to our original recommendation in 2006.

Our proposed doctrine considered accommodation of coalition forces and interagency support for contingency and post-contingency (Phase IV) operations. JP 4-10 addresses interagency and coalition contracting needs extensively. Interagency and coalition support is a core tenet of JP 4-10.

Our study recommended contracting be embedded in COCOM planning with pre-designated, trained personnel deploying with a JTF to enable the combatant commanders to execute their acquisition missions effectively and efficiently (GAO, 2003). This is again a core tenet of JP 4-10. The document addresses COCOM and JTF planning considerations extensively.

Our doctrine proposal recommended COCOM authorities define unique roles and responsibilities to match the planning requirements for each JTF. We recommended the COCOM consider subordination of a contracting command

entity to the JTF leadership and OPCON of in-theater acquisition resources to the contracting command entity to improve insight, directive authority, integration, and adherence to strategic policies. JP 4-10 describes a similar position with directive roles and responsibilities, while leaving enough flexibility for the COCOMs to plan to their unique needs.

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### **CONTINGENCY TO SUSTAINMENT**

Our report, as part of planning strategy, recommended contracting activities transition from higher risk (contingency combat operations) to lower risk (sustainment) at appropriate times for the mission. In this transition, the contract type used should shift from cost plus (more risk on the government where speed and quality is critical) to fixed price (less risk on the government where cost efficiency grows in importance). When a contractor does not have highly variable costs associated with security protection, the U.S. Government has a healthier environment to competitively award firm fixed price (FFP) contracts and make better use of funding. In-theater acquisition expertise can best decide when to change the type of contract. For example, one of the reasons the Civilian Augmentation Program (CAP) contracts were so expensive was they were all flexibly priced—an appropriate view with a highly fluid operational environment. However, as parts of an operation stabilize, fixed price contracts generate better value (D. Scott, personal communication, 2006). JP 4-10 specifically mentions this strategy and identifies potential crossover points for changing contract strategies.

This concept, in our view, is critically important. The transition from contingency to sustainment contracting is necessary to improve the cost efficiency of operations over time. Joint Contracting Activity leadership can help provide JTF commanders appropriate strategies for the transition. At a minimum, a general transition concept added to deliberate planning will help with execution. The inherent flexibility offered by a CAP instrument comes at a premium; and at some point, the cost of that flexibility may not be necessary. In addition, commodity groups (water, food, construction materials, depot maintenance) may transition at different times and under different local conditions. Transition planning should allow for greater competition—a critical step as risks mitigate and cost becomes a greater consideration. JP 4-10, Chapter 8. Section C (3) specifically describes these considerations.

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### **FAR/DFARS MODIFICATIONS**

Our report recommended the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) be reviewed and adjusted to better serve contingency and post-contingency conditions. For example, the security environment in Iraq drove many contracting officers to write cost contracts for Operations and Maintenance (O&M) funding. These contracts, however, typically required the U.S. Government to take ownership

of the material and/or facilities used by the vendor after the contract closed out. As physical goods accrued from the conduct of these contracts, property management became a substantial burden. Additionally, much of the equipment purchased was of limited value to the government. We recommended regulations consider more flexibility in funding thresholds, property purchase requirements, and solicitation timelines to eliminate or minimize these problems (D. A. Scott, personal communication, January 4, 2006). Others we interviewed supported the contention that the FAR and DFARS should either be changed or supplemented to ensure proper contingency guidance and authorities (C. D. Blake, personal communication, January 19, 2006, & A. B. Bell, personal communication, February 8, 2006). As such, we recommended in our report that each COCOM obtain specific advance regulation waivers for each plan as part of the planning process. These would activate automatically upon plan implementation. JP 4-10 chose not to give this authority to the COCOMs. However, it did place this authority with the Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy—a position reporting to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. This is where authority to change DFARS for other tasks resides already, so the choice was obvious. JP 4-10 specifically enhances JTF operations by assigning this DFARS mod responsibility for operational contracting directly and clearly to this director.

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### **OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC TRAINING**

We recommended the doctrine establish training and exercise requirements to generate mature in-theater acquisition capacity, capable of meeting mission needs while operating in austere environments. We stated the doctrine should require that COCOMs consider broad skill sets for a joint contracting activity including contracting, program management, financial, legal, quality assurance, and information technology to meet contract management requirements in the AOR. The doctrine should call for “train the trainer” functions to aid in planned transition to host countries and identify who should pay for the required exercises. Appendix G of JP 4-10 describes broader skill sets and their importance, especially in the organizational construct for large JTF operations.

Our research led us to recommend COCOM and JTF staff acquisition training to help them understand how to best use acquisition capabilities for military and political objectives. For example, with a joint contracting activity providing unity of effort, acquisition capacity can be re-directed temporarily to meet higher JTF priorities. As such, an Air Force (AF) contracting officer could be tasked to contract for line haul to get ammo up to a heavily engaged Marine unit. The following month, when the AF needs contracting capacity to build an airbase, Army resources could temporarily augment AF contracting officers to support the requirement. Doctrine should specifically identify the organization responsible for conducting these training programs. To support political objectives, a JTF could improve a theater-wide strategy of contracting with local companies, thus putting local personnel to work. Joint Publication



4-10 provides extensive detail defining terms, describes contracting command authorities and structure (which is different than operational command structure), and offers the value and costs of contractor support in the AOR. In essence, JP 4-10 is the capstone-training document for COCOM and JTF staffs in the contracting area. As such, JP 4-10 fully incorporates our report's overall training recommendations.

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### **IMPROVED SUPPORTING AGENCY ASSISTANCE**

We recommended use of an in-theater contracting command entity to improve supporting agency assistance to the JTF. As an example, for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) was administering a Stryker repair contract in Qatar that was generally meeting contract performance requirements. Meanwhile another contractor's up-arming efforts were behind schedule, but DCMA had not received a delegation to work those issues (D. A. Scott, personal communication, January 4, 2006). DCMA's core mission is to help the DoD better manage contracts. In fact, DCMA did not receive delegations to several of the most challenging contracts, either at a quality assurance level or more extensively. A unified and coordinated effort expressed through a centralized contracting activity could better direct supporting agency assistance when and where needed. Adding contracting requirements into deliberate planning will force the COCOM to consider the best use of supporting agencies. The GAO had also recognized the lack of coordination as a systemic problem since the late 1980s (Waxman & Dingell, 2004, p. 5). JP 4-10 correctly defines many supporting agency missions and how they can specifically support COCOM and JTF commanders.

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### **CARE AND FEEDING OF CONTRACTORS ON THE BATTLEFIELD**

Contractors perform critical functions for JTFs but also need support. During OIF and other contingencies, contractor support requirements (housing, food, security, etc.) were not uniform, due at least in part because the contracts awarded from various agencies across the DoD did not benefit from authoritative COCOM guidance. The sheer number of contractors and various contracting instruments made it "virtually impossible to keep track of who eats for free and who must pay" based on the terms and conditions set forth in the contracts (D. A. Scott, personal communication, January 4, 2006). The DoD's response to this problem was to create an expensive and complex system of control. Unfortunately, as has happened in many cases in Iraq, this did not fully solve the problem and did not prevent many contractors from receiving services to which they were otherwise not entitled. With insufficient control of the contractors, some companies underperformed by using government support without reimbursement, whereas their contract required the vendor to pay for or separately provide those services. This created funding inefficiencies. JP 4-10

devotes much discussion to this topic and directs the creation of a Contractor Support Integration Plan (CSIP) designed specifically to fix these kinds of issues.

This type of COCOM plan is also critically important in using CAP contracts. For example, in the case with Iraq, Procurement Contracting Officers (PCO) for LOGCAP did not have sufficient guidance to determine how many contractors needed support, what type of support they needed, and whether it would be reimbursable (GAO, 2004b). This left CENTCOM, in the case of OIF, unable to plan LOGCAP support effectively because the huge number of contractors sent and specific status of each contract could not be determined on any given day. Without this information, the number of beds, meals, and support services needed was a difficult target to identify (D. A. Scott, personal communication, January 4, 2006; C. M. Bolton, personal communication, January 19, 2006; & S. M. Seay, personal communication, January 24, 2006). Again, JP 4-10 devotes a considerable amount of detail in describing how each of the Services runs their LOGCAP programs, thus laying the groundwork for averting or minimizing cost inefficiencies in this arena.

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### **SUPPORT FOR A JOINT CONTRACTING ACTIVITY**

In interviewing 19 personnel for our study, we found the following consistent views as shown in the appendix. Significantly, while differences in recommendations for contracting structure existed between the interviewees, most agreed on the need for joint doctrine, proper resourcing, and a central organization to control contract management in theater. Most also agreed planning and training were key considerations. Several of the interviewees also recommended LOGCAP and other contingency contracts be included in operations plans (C. M. Bolton, personal communication, January 19, 2006, & S. M. Seay, personal communication, January 24, 2006).

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### **HEAD OF CONTRACTING AUTHORITY AND WARRANTS**

In our study, we recommended Head of Contracting Authority (HCA) be resident in-theater in the Joint Contracting Activity. We also recommended as a best approach the issuing of warrants within theater. We find consistent recommendations, also in JP 4-10, which designate the HCA should reside in-theater. It also directs Senior Contracting Official assignment to the Joint Contracting Activity to issue warrants, also known as Certificates of Appointment, in-theater efficiently under a single policy.

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### **CONTRACTING OFFICER OPCON**

We also recommended, for unity of effort, all contracting personnel should be OPCON to the Joint Contracting Activity, although the affected personnel do not need to reside in a single location. Initially, when effectiveness is most critical, acquisition professionals need the latitude to operate co-resident with

their units and other agencies to meet mission requirements. This approach is less efficient but is more effective at supporting highly variable operations, the kind of operations most likely found at the beginning of contingency operations. OPCON relationships to a central authority are still possible in this environment, and will allow better flow of strategic-level acquisition advice, including the identification of existing and available contracting instruments. To support this, we specifically recommended using centralized control and decentralized execution for contracting, where guidance would come from a centralized authority but contracting officers would travel with their units and directly support their lower echelon commanders. The key to this strategy is the concept of centralized control and decentralized execution of contracting activity (Houglan, 2006, p. 25). The JP 4-10 does in fact use the same concept of centralized control and decentralized execution with an OPCON relationship to a centralized contracting authority.

## Conclusions

History has shown the increasing importance of contractors on the battlefield. The scope and depth of their support made the integration of DoD and contractor operations essential for mission success. Prior to 2008, joint doctrine did not exist to codify the necessary lessons learned from previous experiences. Now with the publication of Joint Publication 4-10, *Operational Contract Support*, integration of contractors on the battlefield is squarely in joint doctrine with sufficient detail to prevent relearning lessons from previous operations.

Our report, written in 2006 for the Industrial College of the Armed Forces; research from many others; and a high measure of momentum and desire on the part of the Joint Staff and the Services were significant catalysts, culminating in the publication of JP 4-10. Twenty-four of the 26 recommendations from our 2006 report were incorporated into JP 4-10—some almost verbatim and others in highly variant versions of what we originally recommended.

Publication of the JP-4-10 represents diligent work on the part of the Joint Staff, going far beyond the parameters of our original report and providing much-needed depth and breadth to operational contracting considerations.

Finally, the privatization of some aspects of acquisition and contracting during warfare has led to many interesting and complex issues. For that reason, we want to encourage each of you, especially those who are not contracting officers and expect to deploy to a JTF/contingency location, to review JP 4-10 in its entirety.

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APPENDIX

LEVEL OF INTERVIEWEES’ SUPPORT FOR THE CONCEPT OF A JOINT CONTRACTING ACTIVITY

Interviewee	Joint Doctrine	Planning	Resourcing	Training	Reference
Mr. Claude M. Bolton	x	x	x	x	January 19, 2006
LTG William E. Mortenson, USA	x	x	x	x	January 25, 2006
LTG David H. Petraeus, USA	x	x	x	x	January 4, 2006
Mr. Lee H. Thompson	x	x	x	x	February 9, 2006
Maj Gen Darryl A. Scott, USAF	x	x	x	x	January 4, 2006
MG John M. Urias, USA	x	x	x	x	October 24, 2005 (Briefing)
BG Steve M. Seay, USA	x	x	x	x	January 24, 2006
RADM Marty J. Brown, USN	x	x	x	x	March 1, 2006
Col Anthony B. Bell, USAF	x		x		February 8, 2006
Col Casey D. Blake, USAF	x		x	x	January 19, 2006
CDR William F. Reich, USN	x		x		February 10, 2006
CDR Forest. W. Browne, USN	x	x	x		January 25, 2006
LtCol Stephen Elliot, USMC	x		x		February 3, 2006
LtCol John E. Cannady, USMC	x	x	x	x	January 23, 2006
LtCol Mark A. Hobson, USMC	x		x		January 18, 2006
CDR Robert C. Cox, USN	x		x	x	February 2, 2006
COL Ainsworth B. Mills, USA	x	x	x	x	January 19, 2006
COL Stephen B. Leisenring, USA	x	x	x	x	February 9, 2006
COL Jacob B. Hansen, USA	x	x	x	x	February 6, 2006

*Note: An “x” in any of the blocks signifies the interviewee specifically endorsed the need for Joint Doctrine, strategic planning, coordinated resourcing, and/or improved training. Significantly, most of the personnel interviewed for this article recommended planning to ensure proper allocation of resources to top JTF priorities. This is yet again a strong sign that practitioners in the field universally desired joint contracting operations doctrine. The clear recognition of the need for doctrine among contracting practitioners was undeniably helpful in supporting the creation of JP 4-10. The desire and momentum was certainly in place from 2006 to 2008, and the DoD took advantage of that momentum to create JP 4-10.*

